

Best Management Practices for Improving Water Quality

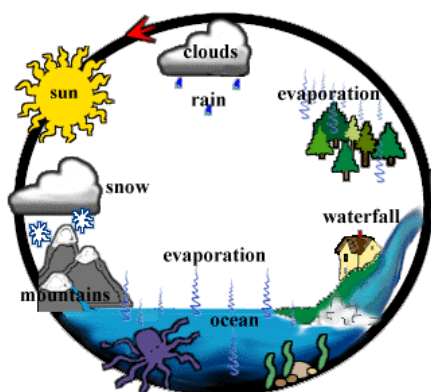


Image courtesy of:



THE WATER CYCLE

Water, like energy, is neither created nor destroyed, and is constantly in motion. When precipitation in the form of rain or snow falls to earth, it either runs off the surface or seeps into the soil. Some of the water in the ground will be taken up by plants and transpired back into the atmosphere; the rest will recharge groundwater systems and eventually discharge into surface water and evaporate.

INVISIBLE REALITIES – Water Cycles and your Harpswell property

Whether we see it or not, water continues its course through air, ground, and water bodies.

When landscaping and gardening here are some practical things you can do to protect your ground water and the shores surrounding our town.

Ground water – Keep it clean.

- Create catch basins or terraces on slopes so water can percolate into the ground and recharge the aquifers.
- Use natural lawn care products rather than dangerous pesticides.
- Maintain your septic system carefully. Do not allow vehicles or other heavy equipment to park on it. Pump out every three years. Don't use a garbage disposal unit. Composting kitchen waste will create a soil amendment and keep down the load on your septic system.
- Minimize water use in your home to lessen the burden on the septic system.
- Limit the use of harsh chemicals like bleach.

Best Management Practices for Improving Water Quality

- **Runoff to the shore – Slow it down.**
- Plant trees and shrubs to create “buffers” (natural filters) along shorelines and on slopes.
- In undisturbed shoreline areas, leave plants that are growing naturally. Don’t rake clear or bare the soil unnecessarily.
- Slow down heavy runoff in problem areas using riprap.
- Use lots of mulch over bare soil. This helps protect plant roots and slows storm waters.
- Plan your paths so they wind parallel to the slope rather than straight down; cover them with chips or crushed rock.
- Don’t mow your lawn to the water’s edge, but let the tall grass hold the soil
- Observe what grows naturally in your area and make use of these native plants or their cultivars instead of exotic ones.
- Large manicured seaside lawns are bad for the Bay and for our valuable clamflats. They are loaded with lawn chemicals and are not good at filtering pollution.
- Remove the bag! Use a mulching blade on the lawnmower. You’ll save time and \$\$\$ by leaving the clippings and returning nitrogen to the soil.
- Minimize use of impervious surfaces on driveways and parking areas.

For more information on:

Stormwater Runoff –

<http://www.thinkbluemaine.org/>

Porous Pavement -

www.greenworks.tv/stormwater/porouspavement.htm

Natural Landscaping -

<http://www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/docwatershed/materials.htm>

<http://www.yardscaping.org>

<http://www.state.me.us/agriculture/pesticides/bayscaper>

Native Plants -

http://extensionpubs.umext.maine.edu/ePOS/store=413&item_number=2502&form=shared3/gm/detail.html&design=413

<http://www.yardscaping.org/plants/index.htm>

Invasive Plants -

http://extensionpubs.umext.maine.edu/ePOS/store=413&item_number=2536&form=shared3/gm/detail.html&design=413

<http://www.yardscaping.org/plants/avoid.htm>